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Report of the Secretary General on  
Progress in Implementation of Rehabilitation and Conservation Strategies  
for Countries with Low Forest Cover

**SUMMARY**

This report summarises progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action relating to Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCC). Reference was made to national reports to the CSD, CBD and CCD, among other sources. The precise definition of a LFCC is still uncertain; here a threshold of less than 10% land area covered by forest was adopted, giving a total of 67 LFCCs. The expert meeting held in Tehran in 1999 helped greatly to provide clearer guidance on the issues that are most important for forest management in LFCCs. The launch of the Tehran Process and the founding of its secretariat represent additional steps forward. However, progress has been slow in establishing the full capability of the Process and its secretariat, and additional resources and personnel are needed from a number of international sources.

In general, low forest cover countries appear to have made limited progress towards implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. Despite some growth in the recognition of the importance of forests in LFCCs, progress in enhancing forest cover has been limited. There is little evidence that restoration of degraded forests or re-establishment of native forest landscapes has been given any priority. It is also difficult to assess what progress has been made in forest conservation among LFCCs. Data on unique forest types and their protection are limited. Technical and institutional capacities have been identified by most LFCCs as serious limitations in progress towards implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and especially drafting and implementation of national forest programmes. International co-operation and financial assistance are required to help remedy these problems. Donor countries and institutions will need to recognise the importance of forests to poverty alleviation in LFCCs and make long-term commitments of resources in order to assist them in improving their capacities. LFCCs themselves need to accord higher priority to forest issues, including the mobilization of domestic resources.

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## I. Introduction

In large areas of the world, and especially in many developing countries, forest cover is limited in extent. In these countries, scarce forest and wooded lands are particularly significant in terms of their economic, social, cultural, environmental and subsistence values. Low forest cover poses special challenges in meeting national needs through sustainable development and ensuring adequate access to the many goods and services provided by forests, including wood and non-wood products, watershed protection, soil conservation, biodiversity conservation and carbon storage. Strategies for rehabilitation and conservation of forests are crucial steps towards sustainable development in low forest cover areas.

The purpose of this document is to facilitate UNFF's 'Review of progress and consideration on future actions'. Specifically, this report has been prepared to support the deliberations at UNFF2, by describing progress made towards implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action relating to the theme of 'Rehabilitation and Conservation Strategies for Countries with Low Forest Cover'. The scope of the report has been limited by the short interval between UNFF 1 and 2. The present report was prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme as the Focal Agency within the CPF for this UNFF programme element. Inputs and comments from other CPF members and the UNFF Secretariat were provided during the preparation process.

## II. Background

For the purposes of this report, the IPF and IFF proposals for action relevant to the theme of *Progress in Implementation on Rehabilitation and Conservation Strategies for Countries with Low Forest Cover* have been summarized by grouping related actions. The development of these 'summarized proposals for action' was based on the Practitioner's Guide to the IPF Proposals produced by the "Six Country Initiative"<sup>1</sup>, and the Australian Summary of the IPF Proposals for Action<sup>2</sup>. A number of proposals specifically relating to indigenous peoples and traditional forest related knowledge will be under discussion at UNFF 4 and have therefore been omitted from this summary. The summarized proposals do not replace the detailed negotiated text. References are provided to the relevant paragraphs of the IPF and IFF reports that contain the full text of the proposals for action.

### 1. Implementation of forest-related decisions at the national level

	Summary Proposal For Action	Reference	
		IPF*	IFF**
I.	Promote the regeneration and restoration of degraded forest areas, including involving indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners in their protection and management	58b(iii) 58c	129c
II.	Plan and manage forest plantations to enhance production and provision of goods and services, paying due attention to relevant social, economic and environmental considerations in the selection of species, areas and silvicultural systems	58b(ii)	

\* Numbers refer to paragraph in IPF final report: E/CN.17/1997/12.

\*\* Numbers refer to paragraph in IFF final report: E/CN.17/2000/14.

III.	Analyse and take into account the related social, economic and environmental implications, costs and benefits of non-wood substitutes and imports of forest products	58b(iv)	
IV.	Seek long-term security of forest goods and services through the development of national forest programmes for sustainable forest management	58b(i)	
V.	Develop and implement appropriate planning and management strategies for the representative protection and conservation of all types of forests on an ecosystem basis, incorporating the full range of forest values, including cultural, social, spiritual, environmental and economic aspects.	46c	85a,b
VI	Develop adequate research and information systems, and improve linkage between forest science and forest policy processes, in order to allow for timely decisions related to national forest policies and programmes	58b(vii)	96c
VII	Take positive action towards forest conservation, by establishing or expanding networks of protected areas, buffer zones and ecological corridors in order to conserve biodiversity, and to safeguard their water supplies and uses in areas affected by drought	58b(v) 58c 46c	
VIII	Establish joint protected forest areas and guidelines for collaborative management of ecologically important or unique transboundary forests		86
IX	Develop and implement methodologies and criteria to assess the adequacy, consistency, condition and effectiveness of protected areas, and their management, incorporating reserve design principles that identify the need for new protected areas		85e 88 89
X	Improve co-operation, co-ordination and partnerships in support of sustainable forest management within a national forest programme, by involving relevant stakeholders including indigenous people, forest owners, women and local communities in forest decision making, and utilising appropriate expertise in international organizations	17b, 17f, 17h, 17i, 40e, g, n 77c, f	19b 64b 66 140a
XI	Promote policies and regulations aimed at creating a favourable environment to attract domestic and foreign private sectors, as well as local community investment, for sustainable forest management, conservation and protection of forests	69d	
XII	Develop and implement partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, indigenous and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas		84 85b,c,d
XIII	Develop and implement a range of innovative mechanisms for financing and encouraging forest		85f 90

conservation, including economic incentives, private contracts, taxes and charges, tax deductions, and possible returns from carbon sequestration, in accordance with, and within the context of the implementation of relevant articles of the Kyoto Protocol; and to address cross-sectoral policies, structural adjustment packages and perverse incentives		
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## 2. International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer

Summary Proposal For Action		Reference	
		IPF	IFF
XIV	Contribute to a global and regional assessment of the status of protected forest areas		85g
XV	Assist LFCC to sustainably manage their forests and in some cases expand their forest cover, through the provision of financial resources and transfer of appropriate technology, as well as through the exchange of information and access to technical know-how and knowledge	58c	30b
XVI	Embark on capacity-building programmes at national, subnational and local levels to promote effective participation in decision-making with respect to forests	58bvi	
XVII	Assist LFCC in building capacity for data gathering and analysis so as to enable them to monitor their forest resources	58e	
XVII I	Support and promote local community involvement in sustainable forest management through technical guidance, capacity-building and information dissemination, provision of economic incentives and legal frameworks; and by supporting direct participation of all interested parties in forest policy discussions and planning	77f 70c 40b	64f,i
XIX	Provide financial support to activities in developing countries related to forest conservation and to the implementation and management of protected areas in the surrounding landscape, in accordance with national action plans		87
XX	Continue the implementation of various measures aimed at effective, equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries, particularly the poorest and heavily indebted countries, including exploring the opportunities for innovative mechanisms, such as debt-for-nature swaps related to forests and other environmentally oriented debt reduction	67g	

	programmes		
XXI	Improve the efficiency of and procedures for international cooperation to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests in LFCC	58d	

### 3. International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments

Proposal For Action		Reference	
		IPF	IFF
XXII	FAO called upon to develop a workable and precise definition of low forest cover, applicable to all countries and suitable for use in the forest resources assessment (FRA) in the year 2000	58a	
XXII I	Explore innovative ways to both use existing financial mechanisms more effectively and generate new and additional public and private financial resources in order to support activities for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests	67f	
XXI V	Undertake efforts to achieve a common international understanding on concepts, essential terms and definitions used in developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management	115d	

### III. Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and of the UNFF Plan of Action

#### 1. Progress in implementation

An “Open-ended International Meeting of Experts On Special Needs and Requirements of Developing Countries with Low Forest Cover And Unique Types Of Forest”<sup>4</sup> was held in Tehran in October 1999. This provided a forum for the discussion of a number of key issues among representatives of LFCC governments, NGOs and relevant international organisations. The recommendations from this meeting are largely reflected in the proposals for action summarised in Section 2 above. The “Tehran Process” was established at this meeting as a mechanism to bring together low forest cover countries and to provide a forum to address the specific needs of developing countries with low forest cover. A secretariat hosted by Iran was established; its “Strategy and Action Plan” emphasises its role in co-ordinating activities and exchange of experience among LFCCs and in disseminating information via a web site.

The expert meeting also recommended that intergovernmental forest policy deliberations should recognise that many low forest cover regions within high forest cover countries have concerns similar to those of LFCCs, and should share experience on progress made with respect to policy implementation. The meeting also recommended that LFCCs should review their forest policies, taking into account the wide range of societal needs that can be met from their forest sectors, and emphasising: non-wood forest products; increased market access for forest products; environmental services; and food security. The recommendations further

emphasised the importance of cross-sectoral linkages, nfps and participatory approaches involving civil society.

Limited progress has been made on the development of a more precise definition of low forest cover. In 1998, UNEP and IUFRO developed a paper on defining low forest cover, which proposed a number of different bases upon which low forest cover could be defined. Although the Tehran meeting discussed this paper, no firm conclusion about the best definition was reached. Most papers supporting discussion at the Tehran meeting used a threshold of 10% land area covered by forest, and addressed the resulting group of 70 countries. The publication of the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2000 by FAO<sup>3</sup> applied a globally consistent definition of forest as “. . . land with a tree canopy cover of more than 10 percent and area of more than 0.5 ha. . . . [where the] trees should be able to reach a minimum height of 5 m”. The FRA 2000 indicates that 64 countries meet this criterion, but the new definition of forest cover applied in this case meant that a number of developed countries previously included among the LFCCs (e.g. Australia, U.K.) are no longer included. Three developing countries considered to be LFCCs on the basis of previous forest cover estimates now have just over 10% forest cover according to the FRA 2000. Information from these countries was included in the preparation of this report, which is therefore based on a total of 67 LFCCs.

A number of activities are being undertaken by countries, multilateral organizations and stakeholders either in direct response to the IPF/IFF proposals, or in support of them. This report attempts to provide an overview of such activities, corresponding to the specific proposals for action. However, at present there is no formal monitoring and reporting system within UNFF, and as a consequence, the findings of this report should be considered as tentative and incomplete. In order to assess action towards implementation, the following sources were consulted:

- first and second national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity (of 53 LFCC parties to the CBD, 22 submitted 1<sup>st</sup> national reports, 11 submitted 2<sup>nd</sup> national reports)
- thematic reports on forest ecosystems to the CBD (9 from LFCCs)
- national reports on forests to the CSD (from 24 LFC countries);
- national reports to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD; 40 from LFC countries);
- National Action Plans to Combat Desertification (11 LFCCs);
- a number of studies and contributions by CPF members, NGOs and others.
- voluntary reports to the UNFF: 4 countries submitted preliminary voluntary reports on how they are organizing the assessment of progress; 5 countries (including one LFCC) submitted more complete reports
- responses to an informal questionnaire circulated to > 100 national contact points; 9 responses were received and analysed, 1 was from an LFCC

The actions towards implementing the IPF and IFF proposals for action on rehabilitating and conserving forests in countries with low forest cover are summarised in **Annex 1**.

### **(a) Country experiences and lesson learned**

Low forest cover countries (LFCCs) are commonly, but not exclusively, characterised by arid or semi-arid climates, poor soils and extensive rangelands. They are particularly prone to

degradation of forest cover and desertification caused by drought and destructive land use practices, including overgrazing. Forest products in LFCCs are predominantly for subsistence use, including non-wood forest products and fuelwood. LFCCs are often dependent on imports to meet their needs for wood and wood products. Although the cost of importing forest products poses no economic problem for the few LFCCs that are prosperous, many other LFCCs are among the poorest countries of the world.

The high importance of the environmental functions of forests are increasingly being recognised in LFCCs. Forests are essential for watershed protection, helping to prevent erosion and reduce sediment loads in streams, conserving scarce water and soil resources, and reducing the risk of flooding. The important role of forests in the conservation of biological diversity in low forest cover countries is also recognised and reported by many of the LFC signatories to the CBD.

Table 1. Change in forest cover from 1990 to 2000 among low forest cover countries (source: FRA 2000, FAO<sup>3</sup>)

	Increasing forest cover	Decreasing forest cover	No measurable change
Number of LFC countries	17	15	35

Some LFCCs have successfully expanded their forest cover in recent years, but many more have continued to lose forest or have seen no change in cover (Table 1). To date, most gain in forest cover has been through plantation activities, with relatively little effort devoted to restoration of degraded natural forests. Although much afforestation is intended for protective and environmental roles rather than for production and economic outputs, its administration is often via agricultural authorities with little or no input from conservation organisations. In some cases reforestation of degraded forest lands has caused serious conflicts with local people who previously used such areas as common grazing lands. Reforestation sites have provided limited benefits for local people in most countries, except employment opportunities provided in plantation establishment and maintenance activities.

While a few countries have made substantial progress, the development and implementation of national forest programmes and policies has proved problematic for a high proportion of LFCCs. The programmes have most frequently stalled owing to a lack of internal support and a decline in external financial assistance. Because of the small size of forest resources in these countries, forest matters are often under the responsibility of government agencies outside the forest sector. Cross-sectoral co-operation is therefore particularly important in LFCCs. Several countries have made efforts to implement integrated watershed programmes involving those institutions responsible for conservation, forestry, agriculture and rural development. In some cases, efforts have been made to introduce participatory approaches encouraging involvement of local populations in planning and management of land use systems. Cross-sectoral efforts are also needed for the development of livelihood opportunities for rural populations in forest areas.



Forest protection is variable among LFCCs and the data available to assess it are limited. Some low forest cover countries have recently adopted policies for expansion and management of protected areas and national parks and established new protected areas. Overall a smaller proportion of all forests is included in protected areas in LFCCs (7.9%) than the global average (10.4%; source: UNEP-WCMC).

Forest institutions in the LFCCs share a number of constraints. Most report a lack of financial and staff resources. The need for training and development of human resources has been underlined. One of the main problems affecting all LFCCs is the lack of reliable, consistent and up-to-date forest information.

### **(b) Emerging issues relevant to country implementation**

LFCCs are in need of approaches for **restoring forest cover in ways that address the full range of forest functions, goods and services**, including poverty alleviation. Such approaches will need to include using native species, addressing the underlying causes of forest loss and cross-sectoral planning at the landscape scale. The Forest Landscape Restoration approach under development by WWF and IUCN provides an example of such an approach. Case studies and practice in Meso-America, southwest China, and East Africa (by WWF and partners) provide useful examples for LFCCs. ITTO is also developing forest restoration guidelines in cooperation with FAO and IUCN.

A second emerging issue highlighted by a large number of LFCCs is **wild fire**, which impedes both conservation of existing forests and efforts at rehabilitation and afforestation. As highlighted in the Secretary General's Report on Deforestation (E/CN.18/2002), the results of analyses of the underlying causes of fire need to be transferred into policy. Initiatives such as Project FireFight and The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) provide support for identifying and responding to fire risks. However, to date these initiatives have focussed principally on countries and areas with large forest resources. They need to be encouraged to generate research and tools that are applicable in areas of low forest cover. Several LFCCs have also identified illegal logging as a significant pressure on forests. The emerging global discussions of **forest law enforcement** (E/CN.18/2002) need to develop tools and approaches that can be adopted by countries with low forest cover for use in their own forest policies and programmes

**Valuing ecosystem services** of forests was identified by several LFCCs as a crucial step in increasing the prominence of forests on their national agendas. Work by WRI, IUCN and others on quantifying and expressing the value of forests in providing water and other ecosystem services (e.g. in eastern Africa) is likely to prove useful in this context. Another recurring issue in discussions of low forest cover is the need for **mechanisms to include low forest cover areas of high forest cover countries** in the process and ensure that they can exchange information and benefit from the experience shared. The Tehran Process can provide an appropriate mechanism for promoting such exchange of information. An additional issue for LFCCs is the **long-term commitment** required for them to be able to achieve sustainable forest management. This issue will need to be recognised and addressed by governments and donors alike.

### **(b) Promoting public participation**

Since forests are not extensive in LFCCs, they are usually not an important source of revenue for the national government in terms of industrial timber production. It is therefore more likely that the greatest importance of tree and forest resources in these countries will be in the area of rural livelihood support, especially for the poor. This provides a favourable environment for public participation in forest management. In spite of their considerable development during recent years, NGOs involved in environmental issues still play a relatively insignificant role in many LFCCs. Nonetheless, participation of NGOs and inter-sectoral dialogue have been increasingly secured in nfp processes in some LFCCs. In some cases, efforts have been made to introduce participatory approaches encouraging involvement of local populations in planning and management of watershed activities and improvement of land use systems. Some countries are using national forest funds to promote local management by channelling assistance to sub-national and municipal governments or to community groups.

Some LFCCs have active ongoing participatory forestry initiatives. These have provided useful experience in the application of participatory and collaborative approaches to management of scarce or fragile forest resources. These experiences deal with issues of land tenure, pastoralism and nomadism, poverty and population growth, migration, desertification, and other topics of interest to LFCCs. In some cases it has been observed that, although the participatory approach is very effective, it takes a long time to apply. FAO has promoted increased public participation in forest and land management through a number of projects in LFCCs. Many donors have also supported these approaches in a range of countries and should be encouraged to support them in LFCCs.

#### **(c) Enabling environment**

In many countries there have been significant improvements regarding the legal framework for SFM and forestry related policies. At the national level, a key problem is the low commitment and priority given to the forest sector, often caused by failure to demonstrate the contribution of forests to socio-economic development. Accordingly, opportunities for funding are often missed by not linking forests to priority concerns such as poverty reduction, human health and well-being, and sustainable development. Other important factors in constraining investment are insecure tenure, policy and market failures, high levels of actual and perceived risk owing to factors outside sectoral control, lack of suitable credit options and weak and unstable regulatory environments that encourage rather than discourage unsustainable or illegal land use practices. In many LFC countries there is a need for external public funding (ODA) to support capacity building, development of appropriate legal frameworks, and creating the socio-economic conditions conducive to investing in SFM. Many developing countries face a general lack of funds, too few skilled people, poor agricultural practices and problems of communication. As a result, practical implementation of nfps and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are still weak.

#### **(d) International and regional cooperation**

The emerging Tehran Process and its secretariat provide an important opportunity for cooperation and collaboration among low forest cover countries<sup>4</sup>. However, care will be needed to ensure that the process reaches constituents beyond the Middle East and North Africa. The incorporation of input from, and discussions with representatives of low forest

cover *areas* within high forest cover countries will also be important. The Convention to Combat Desertification and the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change provide important forums for collaboration among LFCCs.

The Strategy and Plan of Action of the Tehran Process Secretariat calls for the creation of regional “centres of excellence” that will promote cooperation and research on key issues for LFCCs. A number of LFCCs are participating in regional programmes for the exchange of information, particularly in Africa. Regional and subregional organizations such as the African Timber Organization (ATO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) could put particular effort into coordination and regional cooperation on forests and wildlife, and especially into information networking. With support from Dutch trust funds, FAO, together with the LFCC secretariat, SADC, CILSS, IGAD, UNEP, ICRAF, regional forestry commissions and national collaborators are developing, validating and implementing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in dry zones of Africa, Asia and Near East, preparing national reports and through conducting an international meeting on criteria and indicators for LFCCs. They are also conducting case studies in Tunisia, Oman and Iraq in the Near East and Mali, Ethiopia and Namibia in the African region to evaluate the role of planted forests, trees outside forests and significance of non-wood forest products.

## **2. Means of implementation**

### **(a) Finance**

Lack of financial resources is widely acknowledged to be a major constraint to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals. According to OECD Development Assistance Committee analyses, two LFCCs were among the top ten recipients of forestry aid in the period 1994-98. About 20% of World Bank Macroeconomic Adjustment Lending between 1992 and 1998 went to countries with 20% forest cover or less. The declining trend in ODA is recognised by a number of low forest cover countries as a significant factor constraining implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. African countries are faced with the sharpest declines in overseas development assistance for forestry. The African Development Bank (ADB) had planned to dedicate US\$245 million to forestry for the period 1995 to 1997. Because of the low priority given to forestry by governments in the region, this funding did not materialize. ADB’s forestry loans have generally gone first to forest industries (43 percent) second to forest conservation/production (31 percent), while social/rural forestry captures 26 percent.

The need for international cooperation towards sustainable forest management, including financial support, capacity building, research and transfer of technology as stressed by IFF, has not been adequately met in Africa. The region has not benefited from consolidated, regionally rationalized financial support from developed countries. Traditional bilateral support has remained scattered and has had little sustained impact. The mechanisms for overseas development assistance have not promoted collective actions by countries in the region. Yet the countries are in great need of networking for information exchange and capacity sharing. Africa needs a consolidated forestry fund to mobilize collective action and share its limited capacity for sustainable forest management.

Between FY91 and FY01, the GEF allocated \$538.2 million in GEF funding to 87 projects within forest ecosystems<sup>5</sup>; these account for almost 40% of its biodiversity portfolio and 11% of all GEF allocation. About 80% of GEF projects in the current forest portfolio have focused largely on protected areas (source: GEF). As of late 2000, only 8% of the GEF allocation for forest projects was directed to LFCCs.

A number of additional mechanisms may help LFCCs to access finance to support activities relating to the rehabilitation and conservation of forests. The Global Mechanism for securing funding for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is not a fund, but a catalyst to mobilise multi-channel financing sources for the UNCCD; it emphasises mainstreaming, partnership building and a multiplier effect. Ideally, UNCCD funding should be built into the development plans and budgets of concerned countries, with external inputs being used to leverage other resources. The lack of a specific financial instrument poses special challenges, and fund raising for the convention has not met desires or expectations (the mechanism has only US\$6 million for 2001/2002). It has been suggested that the Global Mechanism could link UNCCD action programmes to combat land degradation with corresponding actions in the forest sector.

Some countries are using national forest funds to promote local management and to provide general services of benefit to private forest landowners. One of the most common uses of funds is to give general support for afforestation and reforestation. The forest fund may be derived from government budgets, targeted taxation and/or amounts collected during forest-related law enforcement. An annual spending plan, with outside approval and auditing is a common requirement of forest fund legislation.

The newly proposed revised World Bank forestry strategy acknowledges need to focus on forest-poor areas for poverty reduction and integrating forests into sustainable economic development, but does not acknowledge any global values of forests in these areas. For example, for the Middle East and North Africa, the priorities according to the new strategy are: (i) increase employment of the poor in reforestation, conservation and rehabilitation activities; build stakeholder incentives to manage resources sustainably; and develop local participation in these processes; (ii) incorporate forest issues in comprehensive development frameworks; develop linkages to forests in cross-sectoral investments, especially in rural development and water management; and (iii) undertake further ESW on the linkages between forest land management and broader economic and institutional reforms.

#### **(b) Transfer of environmentally sound technologies**

The Tehran Process Secretariat has established a web site (<http://www/lfccs.net>) to enhance information exchange among LFCCs. It may also help to co-ordinate capacity building and experience sharing among LFCCs. Although there is currently a high rate of technological innovation, many technological developments remain unrecognized, under-utilized or inadequately shared. This is particularly true of new technologies that are especially relevant to countries with low forest cover. Some countries are applying specific technologies to combating deforestation, including:

- increased application of remote sensing and GIS technologies for the assessment of the condition and extent of forest cover; and

- development of information systems for the assessment of forest areas, including development of tools to provide an early warning service for specific threats, such as fire. However, many LFC countries have not been able to implement such technologies because of a lack of technical capacity and financial resources.

### **(c) Capacity building**

Many countries have identified the need for capacity building to help implement the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. Key needs include implementing capacity building programs for government institutions to help foster cross-sectoral policy harmonization, for forest and environment sector personnel to increase the range of tools available for rehabilitating and conserving forest cover, and for local communities to increase their participation in forest management. Well-established forestry research institutions exist only in some low forest cover countries. Most of their research efforts still concentrate on technical forestry problems. There is a need to expand their expertise to address environmental and socio-economic issues, as well as policy analysis.

University-level educational institutions with forestry training components have traditionally existed in several Middle Eastern countries. Training in less traditional aspects of forest management, including conservation management is less developed. Lack of skilled personnel still constitutes a major constraint in forestry development and conservation in many LFCCs. Awareness raising especially with respect to multiple values of forests very important for LFCCs. The Tehran process secretariat could play an important role in generating materials for this purpose.

## **IV. Conclusions**

The expert meeting held in Tehran in 1999 helped greatly to provide clearer guidance on the issues that are most important for forest management in LFCCs. The launch of the Tehran Process and the founding of its secretariat represent additional steps forward. However, progress has been slow in establishing the full capability of the Process and its secretariat, and additional resources and personnel are needed from a number of regional and international sources.

More generally, low forest cover countries appear to have made limited progress towards implementation of many of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, but the precise degree of progress is difficult to assess because of the limited information available. Forest values and benefits and consequently forest sector activities continue to have a relatively low profile within many LFCCs, and this results in limited availability of financial resources for forest management. There has been limited progress in the development of national forest programmes *per se*, but some progress can be seen in other forms of natural resource management and poverty alleviation strategies. The inclusion of forest goods and services in such strategies is likely to enhance progress towards sustainable forest management in low forest cover countries.

Despite some growth in the recognition of the importance of forests in LFCCs, progress in enhancing forest cover has been limited. What progress has been made, has been principally through plantation programmes. There is little evidence that restoration of degraded forests or re-establishment of native forest landscapes has been given any priority. It is also difficult

to assess what progress has been made in forest conservation among LFCCs. Data on unique forest types and their protection are limited.

Technical and institutional capacities have been identified by most LFCCs as serious limitations in progress towards implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and especially drafting and implementation of national forest programmes. International co-operation and financial assistance are clearly required to help remedy these problems. Donor countries and institutions will need to recognise the importance of forests to poverty alleviation in LFCCs and make long-term commitments of resources to improving their capacities. However there is also a need for LFCCs themselves to accord higher priority to forest issues, including the mobilization of domestic resources.

This report identifies six emerging issues in the discussions of forest rehabilitation and conservation in low forest cover countries. Some, such as wildfire and forest law enforcement, are also key to discussions of other elements of the UNFF multi-year programme of work, but will need to be addressed from the perspective of low forest cover countries as well as for more forest-rich nations. Others, including restoration approaches, valuing ecosystem services and identifying low forest cover areas are more specific to the needs of LFCCs and should be the focus of specific UNFF actions directed at supporting these countries. The encouragement of long-term commitment in financial support and other programmes in support of sustainable forest management is important throughout the work programme of the UNFF, but is especially so for the LFCCs.

## **V. Suggestions for consideration by UNFF second session**

UNFF2 may wish to:

- a) Invite donor community to support the continued development of the Tehran Process and its secretariat, and to mobilise financial and technical resources to make it fully operational;
- b) Request the Ad-hoc Expert Group on Finance, to be established at UNFF2, to consider examining the feasibility of developing a special fund, perhaps under the aegis of the Global Mechanism of the CCD, specifically to address rehabilitation and conservation of forests in LFCCs;
- c) Invite countries with low forest cover to:
  - (i) report on the protection status of unique forest types;
  - (ii) accord high priority to forest issues and the full range of values and benefits of forests, including through the mobilisation of domestic resources;
  - (iii) identify ways and means of recognizing and communicating the multiple values and benefits of forests that are specifically applicable for use by LFCCs.
- d) Invite UNEP, with assistance and support from CPF partners, to prepare an in-depth study on approaches for restoring forest cover in ways that address the full range of forest functions, goods and services and disseminate results via the Tehran process and other mechanisms accessible to LFCCs.

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## ANNEX 1: ACTIONS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. Implementation of forest-related decisions at the national level

Summarised Proposal	Action towards implementation
I. Regeneration and restoration of degraded forest areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Of LFCCs submitting 2nd National reports to the CBD, 2% report no measures taken to rehabilitate and restore ecosystems, 8% report some measures in place, 3 % report potential measures are under review.</li> <li>◆ Forest degradation is mentioned repeatedly as a problem, especially in National Action Plans to Combat Desertification.</li> <li>◆ A few countries have given importance to planting with native species rather than exotics.</li> </ul>
II. Plan and manage forest plantations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Nearly all LFC countries reporting to CSD and CBD have afforestation through plantation as a major component of their forest sector activities and many have specific targets for the forest cover they intend to generate by this means.</li> <li>◆ According to the FRA 2000, the 67 LFCCs together have over 10 million hectares of forest plantations. Nearly 10 % of their forest cover is plantation, while globally plantations represent less than 5% of all forest cover.</li> <li>◆ Plantations in LFCCs represent nearly 6 % of a global total of almost 187 million ha. LFCCs' annual plantation establishment (279,000 ha), is also 6% of the global total.</li> </ul>
III. Costs and benefits of non-wood substitutes and imports of forest products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Several LFC countries have reported to the CSD programmes to promote use of non-wood fuels (mostly butane) in areas where pressure on forests is high. However, estimates of the costs of replacing fuelwood by oil are very high except in oil producing countries.</li> <li>◆ Some countries report that low energy costs do not reduce pressure from fuel wood use.</li> <li>◆ Recycling has proved an important mechanism for reducing demands for forest products in at least one LFCC</li> <li>◆ Shortage of forest resources reduces LFCCs' abilities to promote use of wood as alternative to non-renewable resources.</li> </ul>
IV. Development of national forest programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ According to FAO, out of 27 LFC countries for which information is available, 11 are implementing nfps. Two have on-going planning processes. Ten have stalled in the early stages of NFP planning and preparation, while 4 have drafted nfps but failed to implement them.</li> <li>◆ 60% of LFCCs either have no national forest programme or failed to respond to FAO's inquiries on the subject.</li> <li>◆ Most LFCCs reporting to the CBD report little progress on incorporating biodiversity importance into forest planning and management.</li> <li>◆ 13 low forest cover countries of 52 that are parties to the CBD have NBSAPs in place</li> <li>◆ 30% of LFC countries reporting to the CoP of the CCD have National Action Plans to Combat Desertification.</li> </ul>
V. Strategies for the representative protection and conservation of all types of forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> national reports to the CBD, most (6 of 7) responding LFCCs are implementing an ecosystem approach to forest conservation and sustainable use</li> <li>◆ Most LFCCs place a high priority on in situ conservation of biodiversity, one LFCC ranks it as of medium priority.</li> <li>◆ Five reporting LFCCs have a relatively complete system of protected areas in place, one has a system under development, one has a national review of protected areas in place, and one has a national protected areas plan in place.</li> <li>◆ Most reporting LFCCs indicate that resource availability for appropriate <i>in-situ</i> conservation within their countries is limiting or severely limiting. One LFCC reports that resource availability is adequate or good.</li> </ul>



VI. Research and information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Most of the LFCCs reporting to the CBD on forests felt that they had made little progress in sharing scientific and technical information or approaches and tools to improve forest practices with respect to biodiversity. Most also reported little progress in prioritising research activities or disseminating research results</li> </ul>
VII. Establish or expand networks of protected areas & safeguard water supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ According to UNEP-WCMC nearly 8% of forest cover in LFCCs is within protected areas, as compared with a global average of approximately 10%. However the available data on forest cover and protected areas for many LFCCs are of poor quality.</li> <li>◆ Around 14% of mangrove forests in LFCCs are protected, a level equivalent to the global average of mangrove protection.</li> <li>◆ Catchment forests are protected in some LFC countries, but often on an ad-hoc basis.</li> <li>◆ 22% of LFCC submitting First National Reports to the CBD have protected areas. No clear distinction is given as to whether these are representative forest protected areas.</li> <li>● 15% of LFCC countries actively indicated First National Reports to the CBD that they plan to expand their protected areas.</li> </ul>
VIII. Protection and management of transboundary forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Protection of “common” watersheds is specified as a priority regional activity in the Tehran Process secretariat Strategy and Action plan.</li> <li>◆ 33% of LFCCs submitting Second National Reports to the CBD indicate that they have not developed management practices for transboundary protected areas, 22% have done so to limited extent, 11% to a significant extent.</li> </ul>
IX. Assess effectiveness of protected areas and their management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ WWF International has recently developed a Rapid Assessment and Prioritisation methodology to assess the management status of protected area systems. The methodology has been field tested in one LFCC and will soon be applied in one more</li> <li>◆ In 1<sup>st</sup> national reports to the CBD, 2% of LFCC indicated that they had some (usually rudimentary) method of evaluating protected area management effectiveness. 11% of LFCCs were planning or developing such methodologies.</li> <li>◆ Of LFCCs submitting 2<sup>nd</sup> National Reports to the CBD, most have nationally adopted guidelines for the selection, establishment and management of protected areas.</li> </ul>
X. Improve co-operation, co-ordination and partnerships in support of SFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The establishment of the Tehran Process and its secretariat will improve co-ordination and co-operation among LFCCs</li> <li>◆ Fifteen LFCCs have at least drafted NFPs, 12 National Action Programmes to Combat Desertification, 13 have NBSAPs; the degree of participation and cooperation involved in drafting these varies.</li> <li>◆ Some LFC countries reporting to the CSD remarked on difficulties in communication between the forest sector and wider society</li> <li>◆ Only one LFC country reporting to the CBD had promoted co-operation on conservation and sustainable use of forest biological resources</li> </ul>
XI. Policies to attract investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Some countries have offered tax breaks for retaining trees on private lands</li> <li>◆ Others have provided grants to farmers to promote tree planting, especially for shelter belts.</li> </ul>
XII. Partnership mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Only one of nine LFCCs reporting to the CBD had promoted co-operation on conservation and sustainable use of forest resources</li> <li>◆ 9% of LFCCs submitting first national reports to the CBD were actively forming or engaged in partnership mechanisms</li> <li>◆ Second National Reports submitted to the CBD by LFCCs indicate that approximately 90% have undertaken relevant measures</li> <li>◆ A Team of Specialists on Participation and Partnership in Forestry had been established by the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training in order to clarify the concept of participation and to develop a conceptual framework.</li> </ul>
XIII. Innovative mechanisms for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Four developing LFCCs have national forest funds.</li> <li>◆ 40 LFCC signatories to the CCD can potentially make use of the Global Mechanism of the CCD to obtain funding for forest work</li> </ul>

financing

- ◆ Incentive measures are afforded high or medium priority by 66% of LFCCs submitting CBD 2<sup>nd</sup> National Reports. 66% of LFCCs have, or are reviewing policies to promote incentives for forest conservation and sustainable use.
- ◆ 65% of LFCCs reporting to the CBD have reviewed incentive measures promoted through the Kyoto Protocol and UNFCCC. Although a few (ca. 28%) are in the early stages of implementing such incentives, most have not started or are still considering such measures (56%).
- ◆ The Tehran Process has proposed that wealthy LFCCs should contribute to a fund to support forest-related initiatives in developing LFCCs

<b>2. International financial assistance and co-operation</b>	
<b>Summarised Proposal</b>	<b>Action towards implementation</b>
XIV. Global and regional assessment of protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ FAO has evaluated forest protection in the FRA 2000.</li> <li>◆ UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre has performed a more detailed analysis in terms of forest types and management categories of protected areas. For the needs of LFCCs and others it will be important to refine this analysis still further to focus on unique forest types.</li> </ul>
XV. Financial resources, technology transfer, info exchange,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Tehran Process secretariat will raise awareness of forest activities and their importance to LFCCs among donors characteristically supporting development in these countries, including AsDB, AfDB, World Bank, GEF, IFAD</li> <li>◆ From Second National Reports to the CBD, many LFCCs (50%) have some measures in place that promote international technical and scientific co-operation in the field of sustainable forest management. Access to and transfer of technology is of high to medium priority in ca. 71% of countries, but funding is problematic (limited or severely limited for 80%).</li> </ul>
XVI. Capacity-building to promote participation in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The FAO Community Forestry Unit has provided leadership, administration and management of the Forest, Trees and People Programme (FTTP), which is a network of national, regional and international institutions that develop tools and methodologies that support participatory processes in community forestry.</li> <li>◆ International cooperation and the development of approaches in community forestry has been promoted by the FAO Community Forestry Unit (CFU). It is exploring the impact of decentralization on forest resources and the capacities of local communities and authorities to manage and benefit from this process. Conflicts within and between communities and government and other groups arising from forest management have been analysed, with concept notes, an electronic conference, training materials, web sites and other resource materials developed.</li> </ul>
XVII. Capacity building for monitoring forest resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ FAO has provided capacity building to participating countries through the FRA 2000</li> <li>◆ IUFRO provides support to participating institutions e.g. through development of GFIS</li> </ul>
XVIII. Support and promote local community involvement in SFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ FAO's Community Forestry Unit (CFU) has played a major role in supporting community involvement through technical guidance, capacity-building and information dissemination</li> <li>◆ IUCN has formed a Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management (WG-CIFM) to draw and apply lessons from field experience, and to persuade governments and donor agencies to become more responsive to community conservation efforts.</li> <li>◆ In some countries community involvement is now a well-established and integral part of the framework for forest management, however many countries are still at an early stage in introducing forms of community forestry appropriate to their situations</li> </ul>

XIX. Financial support to forest conservation and protected areas management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ In late 2000 the GEF commitment to projects in its operational programme on forests was just over \$349 million. Of this \$26.4 million was directed to LFCCs. A further \$22.7 million was directed to projects in LFCCs in which forests were a secondary focus.</li> </ul>
XX. Solutions to debt problems of developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Approximately \$US 159 million debt has been retired in debt-for-nature swaps focusing on forests</li> <li>◆ In 1998 the USA enacted the Tropical Forestry Conservation Act which allows developing countries to restructure their debts to the US in exchange for actions in support of tropical forest conservation</li> </ul>
XXI. Improve efficiency of international cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The GEF, the European Commission and a number of bilateral donors have been working to share information on their activities, including those relating to forests, that could potentially be used for donor co-ordination – relevant efforts include the GEF project tracking and mapping system, DFID's NARSIS and the USAID-backed NRM tracker, which focuses on Africa.</li> </ul>

### 3. International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments

Summarised Proposal	Action towards implementation
XXII. FAO to develop a definition of low forest cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Progress has been made on the development of a more precise definition of low forest cover. The publication of the Forest Resources Assessment 2000 provided some advance by applying a globally consistent definition of forest. UNEP and IUFRO developed a paper on defining low forest cover, which proposed a number of different bases upon which low forest cover could be defined.</li> </ul>
XXIII. Innovative use of financial mechanisms and new financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The CCD Global Mechanism could potentially play a key role in this context; funding is limited at present</li> <li>◆ ITTO could potentially support activities in LFCCs, as it does in Egypt, were LFCCs to join the organisation.</li> <li>◆ A review undertaken by FAO provided information on National Forest Funds in 41 countries, including some LFCCs. This indicated that a large number of countries have established such funds to provide some degree of assured continuity in funding for their forest sectors.</li> <li>◆ Considerable progress has been made in building consensus on financing SFM through an international process on "financing strategies in SFM" (workshops in Pretoria 1996, Croydon 1999, Oslo 2001)</li> <li>◆ The Marrakech meeting of the UNFCCC in November 2001 finalised operational details of the Kyoto Protocol, which specify how the joint implementation and emissions trading systems will work. It also sought to ensure a prompt start to the Clean Development Mechanism, whose mandate is to promote sustainable development by encouraging investments in projects in developing countries that reduce or avoid emissions.</li> <li>◆ Recognizing that the private sector has a critical role in stopping forest degradation and loss, the CEOs' ad hoc Forum has established a series of working groups to produce recommendations on conservation and forest management.</li> </ul>

XXIV. Common understanding on concepts, terms and definitions

- ◆ At least 140 countries, including some LFCCs, are participating in at least one of the nine major processes on criteria and indicators, which include ITTO, Dry Zone Africa, Near East Process, Dry Forests in Asia, Pan-European, Montreal, Tarapoto, and Lepaterique initiatives
- ◆ Such processes have been supported by activities by a variety of organizations including FAO and CIFOR